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ABSTRACT

This workshop manual focuses on validation procedures designed to foster program improvement rather than compliance monitoring. The manual is in eight chapters. Chapter 1 looks at the elements to be evaluated--organization and management, training, student assessment, design and implementation of classroom interventions, team work, screening a referral to multidisciplinary evaluation, and outcomes--and the Guidelines for Review of Instructional Support Team (IST), 1994-95. Chapter 2 discusses scoring validations, focusing on criteria for basic features, questions and answers to guide evaluations, and a glossary of IST terms. Chapter 3 includes the guidelines for writing validation reports, official report forms, and a sample report. Chapter 4 outlines preparation of the validation study, including the chairperson s checklist and a sample schedule. Chapter 5 provides interview techniques and sample interviews. Chapter 6 provides the team meeting checklist. Chapter 7 focuses on presenting results through providing feedback and validation report procedures. The final chapter includes six appendices: (1) sample letter; (2) sample agenda; (3) simulation: interviews; (4) training cartoon; (5) guidelines for travel reimbursement; and (6) forms. (ND)

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ED 461 617

IST The Instructional Support Team

Validation Training Manual

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A Systematic Search for What Works!

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REVIEW DOCUMENT

Elements To Be Evaluated
Guidelines for Review of IST 1994-95

ELEMENTS TO BE EVALUATED

1. **ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT**

   EVIDENCE FROM: Agreement Form, Interview, Team Meeting

2. **TRAINING**

   EVIDENCE FROM: Training Forms, Interviews

3. **STUDENT ASSESSMENT**

   EVIDENCE FROM: Student Files, Observation, Interview of Student, Teacher and Parent

4. **DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CLASSROOM INTERVENTIONS**

   EVIDENCE FROM: File Observation, Interview of Student, Teacher, Parent, Team Meeting

5. **TEAM WORK**

   EVIDENCE FROM: Interview and Team Meeting

6. **SCREENING AND REFERRAL TO MULTIDISCIPLINARY EVALUATION**

   EVIDENCE FROM: Interviews and/or files or principal's log

7. **OUTCOMES**

   EVIDENCE FROM: Documents should be available. If not, ask.

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW OF IST 1994-95

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF IST

Basic Features Required for Validation

1. School district designates appropriate ISO's to meet needs of students, [§342.24 (B)]. Composition of IST includes principal or designee, support teacher, and student's teacher.

   Is there evidence that feature is in place? ❑yes ❑no

   Comments:

2. Assign appropriate support teacher to building. [§342.24 (b)(2)] Support teacher is employed in accordance with PDE/district agreement.

   Is there evidence that feature is in place? ❑yes ❑no

   Comments:

3. IST maintains minimal data on the operation of the team. [§342.24 (h)]

   Student name
   Date of initial concern
   Name of person expressing concern
   Date of parent contact
   Date and nature of student-specific action taken by IST

   Is there evidence that feature is in place? ❑yes ❑no

   Comments:

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF IST

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

The composition of the IST includes the principal or designee, the support teacher, and the student's teacher in all cases, and other school personnel as needed. The principal convenes IST meetings, coordinates IST services and record-keeping, and has an active role in the IST process. The principal or designee contacts the parent(s) regarding each student's consideration for IST assistance. The IST adheres to timelines required for instructional support activities.

The methods of IST operation are specified and understood by the entire school staff. An action plan to guide IST implementation includes dates when activities are completed and is updated annually. The principal maintains a comprehensive directory of educational services and programs available to students in the building. A log of students identified by IST is maintained with required information updated regularly.

Is there evidence that these features are in place? ❑yes ❑no

Comments:

TRAINING

Basic Features Required for Validation

IST (including the principal) and school staff receive state-sponsored training (including Pennsylvania Principals Training Model) on IST process and component strategies.

Is there evidence that feature is in place? ❑yes ❑no

Comments:

TRAINING

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

The school has an action plan that specifies how training in the processes and components of IST will be accomplished. The principal has received training and guided practice on all processes and components of IST from consultants from the IST training project. The school has provided overviews of IST to all of its faculty, with special emphasis on teachers and staff who regularly participate in IST activities. The principal, support teachers, and other school staff have attended IST Team Training.

After the initial year of IST training, the school analyzes its progress, and plans for follow-up training from the intermediate unit, or from the IST training project.

Is there evidence that these features are in place? ❑yes ❑no

Comments:

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Basic Features Required for Validation

IST implements the screening and evaluation process [§342.26(c)(1)], assesses identified problem, and identifies student's instructional level using curriculum-based assessment techniques.

Is there evidence that feature is in place? ❑yes ❑no

Comments:

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

The IST identifies student's instructional levels using curriculum-based assessment techniques. For each student displaying academic problems, the student is assessed on material from the instructional curriculum and the level of difficulty of the material is checked. The assessment includes an appraisal of the student's mechanics and comprehension/understanding in the area(s) of concern. The assessment yields the student's strengths and weakness, and allows the assessor(s) to compare this with the teacher's expectations as interventions are considered.

For each student exhibiting behavioral/affective problems, the IST observes and/or interacts with the student in order to identify specific inappropriate behaviors in the classroom, life stressors, and coping skills (i.e., self-concept, decision-making, social interaction). Plans are developed for helping the student to behave appropriately. Parents are included whenever possible.

The classroom-based assessment in both academic and behavioral/affective areas is sufficient to provide information regarding the development of appropriate classroom interventions. Once the intervention is initiated, continuous monitoring of student progress on the targeted skill(s) is conducted during the instructional support period. The IST determines both the student's rate of acquisition and retention in the area(s) of concern throughout the intervention period, and the student's degree of need at the end of the intervention period.

Is there evidence that these features are in place? ❑yes ❑no

Comments:

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CLASSROOM INTERVENTIONS

Basic Features Required for Validation

School district provides services to students in an ordered priority fashion from least intensive to most intensive levels. [§342.24 (g)(2)]

Peer support and exchange for instructional personnel
Instructional consultation for school personnel
Classroom training for instructional personnel
Paraprofessional
Team teacher; additional classroom teacher
Special teacher; part-time
Special teacher; full-time
Specialist

Is there evidence that these features are in place? ❑yes ❑no

Comments:

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CLASSROOM INTERVENTIONS

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

The interventions implemented during the instructional support period are based on the initial assessment of the student in the areas of academic, behavioral, affective, and/or classroom discipline. During the intervention period, direct instructional services are provided to identified students in the regular classroom in order to determine the instructional level, to establish the intervention, and to search systematically for strategies that produce successful classroom performance and/or personal adjustment. These activities are conducted for that student by the support teacher or other members of the IST, to support regular classroom instruction. As the intervention period proceeds, the classroom teacher incorporates the intervention into the regular classroom routine, supported by the continuum of regular education services. In using the continuum of services, the school provides services to students in an ordered priority from least intensive to most intensive levels.

If there is an academic skill deficit, the student in systematically taught at the instructional level in areas of concern throughout the intervention period. Instructional materials are adapted to accommodate student learning needs. Testing, homework and grading procedures may be adapted also. In any adapted activity, teachers adjust the difficulty level to conform to the margin of challenge necessary to motivate students to learn.

If the student has a behavioral/affective need, the IST identifies and implements strategies to build self-concept, decision-making skills, social interaction skills, and/or skills for identification/communication of feelings. For classroom discipline problems, precise definitions of appropriate and inappropriate behavior are defined at the school and classroom levels. A structured discipline plan is developed which includes direct communication about what to do, when to do it, and the degree of accuracy required. Parent responsibility and accountability for student behavior is promoted.

In addition to direct work with the student in the classroom, the IST provides consultation, technical assistance, and training to teachers and parents of identified students. The IST also identifies appropriate community resources to support the delivery of services.

Is there evidence that these features are in place? ❑yes ❑no

Comments:

TEAM WORK (no required items)

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

In the process of providing instructional support to identified students, the IST engages in a collaborative problem solving process that incorporates the following actions:

(1) The IST precisely identifies the problem based on assessment information.

(2) Measurable goals for student success are set.

(3) The IST uses brainstorming to generate alternative solutions and classroom strategies, and discusses possible outcomes for each idea.

(4) A consensual decision is reached on recommendations to implement.

(5) Involved staff are assigned to support the intervention and to monitor its effects.

(6) The IST decides how to ascertain that the course of action has been operationalized and monitored as specified, and how to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.

(7) After the completion of the classroom-based intervention, the IST analyzes the student's progress and makes appropriate decisions.

(8) The IST periodically examines its own effectiveness and efficiency in completing its mission through team maintenance techniques.

Is there evidence that these features are in place? ❑yes ❑no

Comments:

SCREENING FOR IST AND REFERRAL TO MULTIDISCIPLINARY EVALUATION

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

Students are identified for instructional support via formal expressions of concern by school staff. In addition, a procedure for parent request of IST assistance for students is in place.

After the intervention period, the IST decided to refer for MDE or to continue successful strategies based on review of progress data including rate of acquisition, rate of retention, and degree of need.

Is there evidence that these features are in place? ❑yes ❑no

Comments:

SCREENING FOR IST AND REFERRAL TO MULTIDISCIPLINARY EVALUATION

Basic Features Required for Validation

The school provides IST consideration for students who are identified through Level I or II screening.

Is there evidence that these features are in place? ❑yes ❑no

Comments:

OUTCOMES

Basic Features Required for Validation

Documents submitted to the district reporting:

Retentions
Referrals
Placements to special education
Referrals to MDE
Students served by IST
Students served by IST who are referred to MDE

Is there evidence that these features are in place? ❑yes ❑no

Comments:

OUTCOMES

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

The school maintains data on the effectiveness of IST for individual students receiving services. Examples include:

(1) Progress in word identification, word fluency, and comprehension;

(2) Progress in computational and problem solving skills;

(3) Decrease in rates of inappropriate behavior.

The school maintains data on the effects of IST on the school in general. Examples include standardized test scores, reports of behavioral incidents, disciplinary referrals, suspensions, numbers of eligible students served in regular and itinerant programs, student hours spent in special education, and numbers of eligible students served by IST.

Is there evidence that these features are in place? ❑**yes** ❑**no**

Comments:

GUIDELINES FOR SCORING

Criteria for Basic Features
Questions & Answers: IST Validation
Glossary of Terms

SCORING CRITERIA FOR BASIC FEATURES REQUIRED FOR VALIDATION

FEATURE	CRITERIA MET	CRITERIA NOT MET
The school district designates appropriate ISTs to meet the needs of students. Composition of IST includes principal or designee, support teacher, and student's teacher.	Students identified for instructional support undergo a process that routinely includes the involvement of the principal or designee, the support teacher, and the student's classroom teacher.	There is indication that one of the required members is frequently not involved in the process. The support teacher serves as the principal's designee.
Assign appropriate support teacher to building. Support teacher is employed in accordance with PDE/district agreement.	The school district's narrative plan describing the employment of the support teacher matches with information obtained during the visitation. If the plan indicates that the support teacher is full-time, 100 percent of the time is dedicated to instructional support activities. If part-time support teachers are used in a full-time equivalent manner, each person serving as a support teacher must dedicate a percent of time to IST that is within 10 percent of the district's narrative plan. When using a full-time equivalent approach, the total time of all persons working as support teachers must equal or exceed 100 percent.	Support Teacher(s)' description of time spent does not match the district narrative plan.

FEATURE	CRITERIA MET	CRITERIA NOT MET
The school district provides services to student in an ordered, priority fashion from least intensive to most intensive levels. • Peer support and exchange for instructional personnel. • Instructional consultation for school personnel. • Classroom training for instructional personnel. • Paraprofessional. • Team teacher; additional classroom teacher. • Special teacher: part-time • Special teacher: full-time • Specialist	Services are applied in an ordered priority fashion from least to most intensive levels. The IST generally favors classroom-based interventions that involved the classroom teacher before pull-out and specialist programs.	Classroom teachers of students receiving instructional support are not involved at any time in the intervention for the student. All interventions are accomplished by the support teacher and other specialists.
IST maintains minimal data on the operation of the team. • Student name • Date of initial concern • Date of person expressing concern • Date of parent contact • Date and nature of student-specific action taken by IST	The required records are maintained for each student who has been identified for instructional support. These records may be kept in a principal's log or in any other education record (e.g., student file) that is maintained in the school.	Data are not maintained in writing for students identified for instructional support.

FEATURE	CRITERIA MET	CRITERIA NOT MET
The IST and school staff received state-sponsored training on the IST process and component strategies.	The school staff have engaged in the required training, including the following: • The principal has attended Principal's Training, Elementary Student Assistance Training, IST Team Training and overviews of all components. • The support teacher has attended Elementary Student Assistance Training, Team Training, and has received guided practice in curriculum-based assessment and instructional adaptations. • At least one other school staff member has attended Elementary Student Assistance Training and Team Training; there has been guided practice for at least one other team member (may be support teacher) in Effective Interaction Patterns and At-Risk Strategies. • The team has received guided practice in collaboration.	Required training was not conducted.

FEATURE	CRITERIA MET	CRITERIA NOT MET
	Note that in the case where there have been personnel switches in the building, training for staff members who no longer work in that building suffices to pass this item. (For example, this item is passed if the original principal attended Principal's Training, but the current principal has not yet attended.)	
The school provides IST consideration for students who fail to meet minimum criteria in Level I or II screening.	The school has a procedure for reviewing Level I (e.g., group-based) and Level II (e.g., motor, speech, and language) information, and for referring at risk students to the IST.	There is no procedure either for reviewing Level I and II data or for referring students who failed such screenings for IST consideration.
The team implements the screening and evaluation process, assesses identified problems, and identifies the student's instructional level using curriculum-based assessment techniques.	As part of the instructional support process, the IST provides for an assessment of the presenting problems. For academic problems, the student's curriculum materials are used as the basis for the assessment. This assessment includes an analysis of the level of difficulty of the curriculum materials. Assessment of student progress continues throughout the intervention period.	Assessment is not completed or consists of one-time examinations (e.g., using norm-referenced assessment.) There is no analysis of student progress during the intervention period.

FEATURE	CRITERIA MET	CRITERIA NOT MET
The district documents outcomes of IST including: • Students served by IST • Referrals to MDE • Placements in Special Education • Retentions	The school district submits these data to PDE on an annual basis.	The school district does not provide these data to PDE as required.

IST VALIDATION ANALYSIS OF PROGRAM FEATURES QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

TRAINING

Who should be trained in IST and how?

The school should have an action plan that specifies how training in the processes and components of IST will be accomplished. The principal must attend the Pennsylvania Principal's Training Model and receive training on all of the processes and components of IST. The support teacher receives training on all processes and components of IST and guided practice in CBA and instructional adaptations from consultants from the IST training project. Guided practice should also be provided for the support teacher or one other team member in effective interaction patterns and student assistance strategies. The school should provide overviews of IST to all of its faculty, with special emphasis on teachers and staff who regularly participate in IST activities. The principal, support teacher, and at least one other school staff member must attend IST Team Training.

After the initial year of IST training, the school should analyze its progress and plan for follow-up training from the intermediate unit or from the IST Training Project.

What is an "Overview of IST"?

All school staff should receive an overview of the IST process. This presentation should consist of the many events that occur during the 60 day time period of instructional support including entry, hypothesis development, verifying, and analysis of outcomes.

The role of the various components in the context of this process should be described. The goal of an overview of IST is for all school personnel to understand the workings of the IST and to be prepared for participation in the process when they identify a student who has need for instructional support.

What constitutes guided practice and team training?

While building and function is covered in Collaboration Training and in Team Training, teams need Guided Practice in team functioning. Guided Practice is provided by a Consultant when the Consultant demonstrates effective team functioning, observes a team meeting, and prides instructive feedback on aspects of team operation.

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF IST

Who is the IST?

The composition of the IST includes the principal or designee, the support teacher, and the student's teacher in all cases, and other school personnel as needed. Most schools involved Chapter I specialists, school psychologists, guidance counselors, etc. depending on the particular student's needs. Membership for different cases is flexible beyond the three required members. It need not be the same people all the time. IST does not stand for the Instructional Support Teacher; the support teacher alone is not the team.

Is there a core team?

The Special Education Regulations and Standards indicate that for each student identified for instructional support, a team of the student's teacher, the support teacher and the principal must be engaged in the case. The Regulations also indicate that other school personnel (e.g., other teachers, remedial specialists, guidance counselors, school psychologists, etc.) may be utilized to assist in the instructional support process. There is no standard core team required beyond the three persons designated in the Special Education Standards. Many schools alternate team members depending on the nature of the individual case.

What is the principal's role in IST?

The principal convenes IST meetings, coordinates IST services and record keeping, and has an active role in the IST process. The principal sets the tone for commitment and success.

Who initiates the Instructional Support Team process?

Any school staff member or a parent can identify a student needing instructional support. Once the student is identified, each school can decide the procedure the IST will take to process the case. The principal is responsible for managing Instructional Support Team meetings and other events during the instructional support process. Students may be discussed at a team meeting that is scheduled or arranged on an ad hoc basis.

How are parents involved?

The principal or designee contacts the parent(s) regarding each student's consideration for IST assistance. This contact need not be in writing; signed permission is not required. Personal contact through meetings and/or phone calls is best. The parents' active involvement in assessment and intervention is recommended.

What records are kept for the IST?

A log of students identified by IST is maintained with required information (name, date referred, person referring, date parent notified, date and nature of intervention). It is also worthwhile to keep data on the interventions and who is doing what. Specific forms are not required. Burdensome record keeping is discouraged.

Is the IST a team meeting process?

Team meetings may be useful in many cases especially for development of the intervention an review of progress. However, large team meetings are not required for every case. It is crucial to understand that instructional support is a classroom-based process. What happens in the classroom is most critical to IST. Contacts among various team members during the course of IST are essential to the process.

What may happen during the first 10 days following a request for assistance?

During this entry period, the following events should occur:

1) The parents should be notified.
2) The teacher should be interviewed to begin the process of problem identification and goal setting.
3) Initial assessment should be conducted in academic areas (e.g., curriculum-based assessment). If the issue is behavioral or emotional, the student's behavior should be observed in class, and the parents should be interviewed.

What kind of planning is required for IST?

An action plan to guide IST implementation including dates when activities are scheduled and completed is a good practice. Plans for IST should incorporate how all school staff will be involved in the training and implementation of the IST process. The action plan should be updated annually.

How does the IST maintain effectiveness over time?

The IST periodically examines its own effectiveness and efficiency in completing its mission through team maintenance techniques. The team should focus on effectiveness, efficiency, logistics, interpersonal comfort, inclusion, and control.

How are students identified as needing instructional support?

Students are identified for instructional support in the following ways. First, formal expressions of concern by school staff for students needing IST assistance are made. Second, a procedure for parent request of IST assistance for students is in place. Third, the school provides for IST consideration of students failing Level I or II screening.

Are students in special education eligible for IST assistance?

The IST provides instructional support and consultation to regular educators for eligible students who are included in regular education programs.

Elaborate how the support team should be used regarding already identified special education students who are included and which people on the team should be involved in that case.

As indicated in Section 14.24(b)(4) of the Special Education Regulations, IST services can also be used for students who are enrolled in special education programs. That section indicates that IST can be utilized to " . . . Provide services to individual exceptional students if required by the students' IEPs . . . ." The concept is that IST can serve as a bridge with regular education for students in special education programs. When students are included in regular classes, the Instructional Support Team can meet to assist the receiving regular class teacher in making accommodations that will help the student to succeed in the regular environment. The team can also plan for supportive services that will help the teacher meet the student's needs.

In using the IST with exceptional students, it is important to remember that standards prohibit the support teacher from serving as an in-class teacher or tutor for students who are eligible for special education. Rather, the service to these students is provided by the Instructional Support Team through the regular education continuum of services. Of course, the support teacher, as a member of the IST, can participate in IST meetings on these students. Also, the IST should facilitate, and not inhibit, appropriate and effective connections between the student's regular and special program teachers. Special educators have always served as consultants to regular class teachers for their students, and these relationships should be encouraged. Finally, this provision does not relate to using IST for enhancing or managing programs for gifted students.

Can IST services be requested on an IEP? What would this look like?

When IST is utilized to support students with disabilities in the regular classroom, this service should be included in the student's IEP. This service may be appropriately indicated as "Services of the Instructional Support Team" in the "Other Considerations" section of the IEP.

Is IST a special education or a regular education initiative?

IST is best seen as both a regular and special education initiative. The Special Education Regulations indicate that each school should have in place the following features of IST:

1) Assure that a continuum of services is available and used effectively in each public school building.
2) Provide peer support for teachers and other staff members to assist them in working effectively with students . . . .
3) Provide initial screening and direct intervention for those students prior to referral for a multidisciplinary evaluation . . . .
4) Provide services to individual exceptional students if required by the students' IEPs . . . . (§14.24[b])

Points 3 and 4 are clearly related to special education. In Point 3, IST is indicated as the screening mechanism for students who are to be considered for a multidisciplinary evaluation. In Point 4, IST is designated as the "bridge" between special education and regular education for students with disabilities who are included in regular classes.

While the IST is firmly established in the Special Education Regulations, it has clear implications for regular education. In Point 1 of the Regulations, it is articulated that IST serves as a vehicle to connect to the various programs and services available within the regular education program for students who are experiencing difficulty. As a peer support program for teachers (Point 2), IST assists regular educators in identifying successful strategies for identified students through other teachers and support staff. Finally, it can be noted that the use of IST as a vehicle for inclusion of students with disabilities (Point 4) is directed toward establishing support systems within regular classes for these students.

Can a student receive IST services for two (or more) consecutive 30 day implementation periods (e.g., to revise a goal or plan, or to work on another goal)?

An important distinction needs to be made between: (1) screening students for the purposes of multidisciplinary evaluation (MDE), and (2) the need to provide ongoing instructional support for at-risk students in general. Regarding screening for MDE, the timeline for IST as described in Section 14.24(g) of the Special Education Regulations serves three functions:

- Provide parents with a safeguard that screening activities for multidisciplinary evaluation will be conducted in an expeditious, time-limited fashion.
- Provide a time framework for the operation of the Instructional Support Team, and
- Limit the involvement of the support teacher to a 60 day time period.

In the 60 days allotted for IST, there is provision for one 30 day intervention period. At the end of the 30 day intervention period, a decision on referral to multidisciplinary evaluation must be made by the team and the work of the support teacher in establishing and supporting an intervention in the regular classroom is terminated. The timelines do not provide for a second 30-day intervention.

Given that the assessment and intervention period of IST is a maximum of 60 school days, it is incumbent upon the team to identify precisely the student's problems and set measurable goals in each area of concern so that interventions to address these issues can be implemented during this period. It is acknowledged that all of the student's difficulties may not be resolved by the end of the 60 day intervention period. The Instructional Support Team may continue to meet on a periodic basis to provide support to the classroom teacher on the ongoing resolution of the difficulties. The support teacher, as part of the IST, can continue to offer advisement in these meetings. To meet the learning needs of these students, each school should develop a seamless system of instructional support, where efforts of the support team are expanded outward to make use of the full resources of the school. However, the support teacher may not continue to work individually with the student beyond the 60 day period.

It is also understood that a student who is processed through IST may need to be assisted by this process again if different concerns arise at a later time. For example, a student who has received a successful intervention in reading as a result of IST may at a later time display behavior problems as a result of a new stressor in the student's life. At that point, the IST

process can be used to address this new concern, an the support teacher can be utilized in the classroom.

Under what circumstances can a child who carries a label of "gifted" receive instructional support services?

The Instructional Support Team process is not to be used as a screening mechanism for students who are being considered for gifted programs, nor is it to be used to plan for the development of a gifted program in a regular classroom.

However, mentally gifted students who display learning adjustment problems in the classroom (e.g., behavior problems) may receive services from the Instructional Support Team through the usual procedures.

In these cases, the student may be considered to be screened for the possibility of other exceptionalities.

May an IST set a date at the end of each school year after which no further referrals to the team will be processed for that year? This date would, of course, be no more than 60 school days prior to the end of the school year.

A school may not set a cut-off date for identifying students in need of instructional support. The Special Education Regulations require that the IST process begin within 10 days after a student is identified by school staff or parents as requiring instructional support. In cases where this need is identified at the end of a school year, the timeline for IST may be continued into the next school year, especially in the cases of interventions in the classroom.

If IST is being used to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classes, the timeline for this service may be reflected on the student's IEP. The 60 day timeline pertains to the use of IST as Level III screening for MDE, not for assistance in the inclusion of eligible students.

May the IST process be instituted by the school even though the child's parents have notified the school that they do not with the process to begin?

There is no provision for parental permission for the use of IST as a screening process. Because IST is also a vehicle for planning for the continuum of regular education services and as a peer support program for teachers, the procedures of IST may be considered as part of an effective public school education. This connection is established by the board of education when it institutes IST in the school. Consequently, parents do not have a right to block the operation of effective instructional practices.

When parents display opposition to their children's involvement in the IST process, it may be taken as a need for improved communication between the parent and school. In regulation and in the training program parent involvement in the IST process is essential. It is anticipated that schools will work diligently toward the resolution of expressions of concern by parents and work collaboratively with them to address the student's needs. In all cases, schools should fully inform parents of all assessment and interventions implemented through IST.

Must the parent be invited to participate in all IST meetings?

Instructional support is a fluid process that features multiple meetings and contacts between teachers, specialists, students, and their parents. For each student receiving instructional support, the involvement of the principal, support teacher, and classroom teacher is required, as is notification of the parents. Many schools who have implemented the IST process have reported tremendous success in involving parents in a meaningful way in the IST process, including attendance at IST meetings. However, because the IST process includes numerous meetings and contacts, attendance by the parents at all of these junctures is not possible. IST meetings may be scheduled without the presence of the parents.

May a student be retained in grade without consideration by the Instructional Support Team if the teacher, parent and principal feel that this student is "overplaced" and developmentally inappropriate for the current grade level?

There is no requirement that the instructional support process by utilized for students who are being retained in grade. However, students who are being considered for retention are likely candidates for instructional support. Students in this situation are typically experiencing various aspects of school failure for which IST is designed to assist. In addition, the research on retention in grade clearly indicates the questionable nature of this practice. The utilization of a team-based decision-making process when faced with this alternative is encouraged.

Can school psychologists work with individual students within the IST process without written parental permission?

There is no requirement for receiving written parental permission for any of the activities involved in the instructional support process. Instructional support is considered to be screening for possible referral to multidisciplinary evaluation. Rather, parental notification is required within the first 10 days of involvement in IST. School psychologists who work within the context of IST may do so without receiving written parental permission for their activities. There is no reason that activities carried out by one professional (e.g., guidance counselor, teacher) do not require parental permission while the same activities provided by another professional (i.e., the school psychologist) would require a unique permission.

In the context of IST, school psychologists, like other school specialists and teachers, may observe the student, consult with the teacher and other school staff, conduct assessments of a screening nature (e.g., curriculum-based assessment) to identify instructional level and to plan interventions, or interview the student and parents. It is anticipated that at his stage, the psychologist would not use full-scale tests of intelligence or comprehensive personality inventories that are more typically used in an multidisciplinary evaluation. If the IST decides that further information of this sort is needed, a referral to multidisciplinary evaluation is indicated and written parental permission is required.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

How does the IST check the student's academic skills?

The IST identifies students' instructional levels using curriculum-based assessment techniques. For each student displaying academic problems, the student is assessed on material from the instructional curriculum and the level of difficulty of the material is checked. The assessment includes an appraisal of the student's mechanics and comprehension/understanding in the area(s) of concern.

What is the IST looking for when they assess academic skills?

Areas of mismatch between the skills of the student, the curriculum, and the instructional requirements on a day-to-day basis are analyzed. Many students receiving instructional support are found to be at frustration level in the tasks required in the classroom.

What does assessment in the curriculum mean?

For academic problems, all assessments should be based in the student's curriculum. Analysis should be done of the student's instructional level within those curriculum materials. The student's performance in curriculum materials is the basis on which the student's success in IST will be judged. The curriculum consists of the tasks and materials that the student engages in on a day-to-day basis.

How does the IST assess the student's classroom behavior and affective needs?

For each student exhibiting behavioral/affective problems, the IST identifies the student's inappropriate behaviors in the classroom through systematic observation. In addition, the IST interviews the teacher and the parents regarding the student's classroom adjustment.

What is the IST looking for when they assess classroom behavior and affective needs?

The IST examines the student's inappropriate behaviors in the classroom, life stressors, and coping skills (i.e., self-concept, decision-making, social interaction and identification/communication of feelings). For discipline problems, the IST analyzes classroom communications with the student.

What does it mean to assess life stressors?

When addressing interventions in the student assistance component, life stressors should be addressed. Life stressors are events or situations in the home or community that may have a negative impact on the student's performance at school (e.g., child abuse, drug and alcohol

abuse in the home, etc.) Interviewing the parents is the most appropriate way to assess potential life stressors.

How does the IST assess classroom communications?

If the student has a discipline problem, an examination of student/teacher interaction patterns is encouraged. An important part of that process is the assessment of classroom communications. These are communications between the teacher and student. A team member would observe these interactions to determine the extent to which clear communications are made with the child. In appropriate behavior in school is often the result of failure to send clear messages to the child on the specific behavioral expectations of the classroom.

What does the IST do with the information that it collects in its assessment of the identified student?

The classroom-based assessment in both academic and behavioral/affective areas should be sufficient to provide information regarding the development of appropriate classroom interventions.

How often does the IST assess the student?

Once the intervention is initiated, continuous monitoring of student progress on the targeted behaviors/skill(s) is conducted during the instructional support period. The IST determines the student's rates of acquisition and retention in the area(s) of concern throughout the intervention period and the student's degree of need at the end of the intervention period. There is research that indicates that collecting data a minimum of two times per week throughout the intervention is needed for effective progress monitoring.

How does the IST monitor interventions?

When the IST decides on an intervention to use in a classroom, plans should be made for at least one team member to monitor the intervention. The support teacher or other team member would assist the classroom teacher in establishing the intervention and would visit the classroom on a regular basis to continue the intervention. "Fine tuning" of the intervention should occur followed by the gradual withdrawal of the support teacher or other team member in favor of the teacher and other regular education staff.

How is rate of acquisition assessed?

As the intervention is implemented in the classroom, the student's response to the intervention is recorded in a behaviorally based method. Depending on the target problem, indicators such as number of words learned, response to comprehension questions, number of mathematics computations produced, number of behavioral incidents, etc. are recorded and charted in a way that allows for analysis on the student's progress during the intervention period. The margin of challenge is a critical feature of this calculation indicating how much progress a student can make in an individual intervention session.

How is the rate of retention assessed?

The rate of retention is measured by the student's ability to retain new learning. This construct may be assessed through an evaluation of the student's ability to recall recently learned information. Alternatively, the student's ability to apply newly learned information is also an effective measure of retention.

How does the IST determine the degree of need?

The degree of need is the extent to which the student can be maintained successfully at the instructional level in a regular educational program with continued support, as contrasted with need to provide special education in order to maintain the student at the instructional or success level.

How is placement derived from degree of need?

If a student is successful in the regular classroom with regular education supportive services during the period of IST, the student is by definition not eligible for special education. If, however, the student is not successful in regular education during instructional support, or if the services needed in order to achieve or maintain success for the student go beyond what can be provided in regular education, the student is referable to multidisciplinary evaluation and may be eligible for special education.

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CLASSROOM INTERVENTIONS

Define intervention.

An intervention is an alteration to the instructional program in the classroom that is monitored in a data-based manner. These strategies or techniques are facilitated by support teachers or other team members for the purpose of gauging their effectiveness in promoting student success.

What is the source of ideas for classroom interventions?

The interventions implemented during the instructional support period are based on the initial assessment of the student receiving instructional support in academic, behavioral, affective, communication, and/or classroom discipline areas.

What happens during the instructional support period?

During the intervention period, direct instructional services are provided to identified students in the regular classroom in order to determine the instructional level, to establish the intervention, and to search systematically for strategies that produce successful classroom performance and/or personal adjustment.

Who is responsible for interventions used during the instructional support period?

These activities are conducted by the support teacher or other members of the IST for that student, in support of the regular classroom instruction.

Who creates the action plan for a student receiving instructional support?

After the initial assessment, the team brainstorms interventions and decides on an approach to take. These strategies should be recorded in an action plan for the intervention so that the team can judge whether the intervention was indeed used during the instructional support period. A common fault is that team members brainstorm on what the intervention should be, but often fail to consider the best way to manage the intervention. This management is critical in assisting the classroom teacher.

What does the teacher do during the instructional support period?

As the intervention progresses, the classroom teacher incorporates the intervention into the regular classroom routine, as supported by the continuum of regular education services. In using the continuum of services, the school provides services to students in an ordered priority fashion from least intensive to most intensive levels.

What are some typical academic interventions used in IST?

If there is an academic need, the student is systematically taught at the instructional level in areas of concern throughout the intervention period. Instructional materials are adapted to accommodate for student learning. Teachers also may adapt testing, homework and grading procedures to accommodate identified students. In any adapted activity, teachers adjust the difficulty level to conform to the margin of challenge necessary to motivate students to learn.

What are some behavioral/affective interventions used in IST?

If the student has a behavioral/affective need, the IST identifies and puts into practice strategies to build self-concept, decision-making skills, social interaction skills, and/or skills for identification/communication of feelings. For classroom discipline problems, precise definitions of appropriate and inappropriate behavior are defined at the school and classroom levels. A structured discipline plan includes direct communication about what to do, when to do it, and the degree of accuracy required. Parent responsibility and accountability for student behavior is promoted.

How does the IST plan interventions to go from the least to the most intensive levels?

Schools should have a functional continuum of services that is ordered from least intensive to most intensive levels. In brainstorming interventions, the IST should favor selection of those interventions that are least intrusive to classroom organization. Emphasis should be placed on those interventions that are easily managed by the classroom teacher with little help so that the chances of the intervention being institutionalized as a part of classroom routine is maximized.

TEAM WORK

What process is the basis for IST meetings?

The collaborative problem-solving model is the basis for IST meetings.

How are problems identified for students needing instructional support?

The IST precisely identifies the problem based on assessment information and sets measurable goals for student success.

Why must a measurable goal be set for the student?

Measurable goals allow the team monitor the effectiveness of the intervention and to evaluate the adequacy of the student's progress during the instructional support period.

How does the IST decide on which strategies to use with the student?

The IST uses brainstorming to generate alternative solutions and classroom strategies, and discusses possible outcomes for each idea. Many of the strategies are derived from the initial assessment.

How does the IST plan for the intervention?

After a consensus decision is reached on recommendations to implement, involved staff are assigned to support the intervention and to monitor its effects. The IST decides on how to ascertain that their recommended course of action has been operationalized and monitored as specified and how to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.

What does the IST do during the intervention with the student?

Members of the team (e.g., the support teacher) provide direct instructional service in the classroom for the purpose of establishing the intervention, maintaining the student on the instructional level, and systematically searching for a successful strategy for the student. In addition to direct work with the student in the classroom, the IST provides consultation, technical assistance and training to teachers and parents of identified students. The IST also identifies appropriate community resources to support the delivery of services.

What does the IST do at the end of the intervention?

After the completion of the classroom-based intervention, the IST analyzes the student's progress and decides to refer for multidisciplinary evaluation or to continue successful strategies in the classroom with the assistance of other regular education support services.

On what does the IST base its decisions at the end of the intervention period?

The decision to refer to multidisciplinary evaluation is based on a review of progress data, including rate of acquisition, rate of retention, and degree of need. The degree of need is the functional ability of the regular classroom program to maintain the student at the instructional level.

OUTCOMES

How are teams trained to complete end-of-year building data requests by PDE?

The IST Consultants should provide training to the school principal and other team members who are involved in collecting data on the operation of IST and placements in special education. Directions are provided by the Bureau of Special Education on specific data to collect.

How does the IST record the number of students identified for IST?

The most expeditious approach to recording students identified for IST is to keep a Principal's Log that would record each student identified and the disposition of the case through the IST process.

How does the IST determine the number of students referred to IST who go to MDE?

The best approach is to have a Principal's Log show the ultimate outcome of each student who is served by IST including referral to MDE and eventual placement in special education. This

practice will allow a principal to readily calculate the number of students placed in special education from the IST process during the course of a school year.

How does the Instructional Support Team keep track of the number of students served by IST who are placed in special education?

The best approach is to have the Principal's Log show the ultimate outcome of each student who is served by IST including referral to MDE and eventual placement in special education. This practice will allow a principal to readily calculate the number of students placed in special education from the IST process during the course of a school year.

How does the team record the number of retentions?

As part of the building data requested by PDE, the IST under the leadership of the principal should count the number of students who are retained in grade during that school year. This count would not include numbers of students in transitional program (e.g., transitional kindergarten, pre-first grade).

THE VALIDATION PROCESS

What is required for validation?

At the end of the second year of operation of IST, the school receives an on-site review by a validation team. The team is usually composed of IST training consultants, Intermediate Unit specialists, and/or school practitioners. In conducting interviews, observations, and review of records, the validation team attempts to provide a comprehensive review of the program in place in that school. The items required for minimal approval as a validated school are as follows:

- Manage the screening and evaluation process [342.24(e)(1)]: The school district designates appropriate ISTs to meet the needs of students. The composition of IST includes principal or designee, support teacher, and student's teacher [342.24(b)].
- Assign appropriate support teacher building. [342.24(b)(2)]: The support teacher is employed in accordance with PDE requirements.
- The school district provides services to students in an ordered priority fashion from least intensive to most intensive levels [342.24(g)(2)]:

Peer support and exchange for instructional personnel
Instructional consultation for school personnel
Classroom training for instructional personnel
Paraprofessional team teacher; additional classroom teacher
Special teacher: part-time
Special teacher: full-time
Specialist

- The IST maintains minimal data on the operation of the team [342.24(h)], including:

  Student name
  Date of initial concern
  Name of person expressing concern
  Date of parent contact
  Date and nature of student-specific action taken by IST

- The IST and school staff receive state-sponsored training on the IST process and component strategies.

- The principal has received orientation to IST process and has participated in mandated PDE training on IST process.

- The support teacher has received orientation to IST process and has participated in mandated PDE training on IST process. The support teacher has participated in guided practice with the IST consultant on instructional support skills.

- The ISTs have participated in mandated PDE team training.

- The district has coordinated an ongoing plan on in-district training through the IST consultant. In-district training has been planned, implemented, and successfully completed.

- Implement the screening and evaluation process [342.26(c)(1)].

- The IST assesses the student's identified problem and identifies the student's instructional level using curriculum-based assessment techniques.

- The school documents the following outcomes of IST:

- Retentions in grade: District documents retentions in grade as a percent of overall student population.

- Referrals for MDE: District documents the number of referrals for MDE.

- Placements in special education: District documents the number of students who are placed in special education.

- Number of students served by IST: District documents total number of students in the building receiving IST services during the school year.

It should be noted that schools are individually validated; there is no district-wide validation of IST.

What procedure is followed if a building is not validated?

If a school does not receive validation as a result of the initial review by the validation team, the principal should seek technical assistance in developing those features that are net yet in place. Contact with the Intermediate Unit State-wide Support Initiative (SSI) personnel is strongly encouraged in this situation. When the school has put in place the missing features, the principal or contact person should notify the Bureau of Special Education and send documentation on the changes. A school may be validated as a result of a review of this documentation. However, occasionally, a second visit by a validation team may be required.

After validation, what incentive is there to maintain a high degree of implementation on instructional support services?

The achievement of validation should signify that the school has in place the basic features of a program that meets the needs of all students in the regular classroom. It is anticipated that this successful program will have a direct impact on outcomes that are beneficial to students including increased achievement, decreased use of grade retention, and decreased referral to special education services. These outcomes not only indicate a direct benefit to students and their families but should also result in cost savings over time for the school district.

In addition to direct benefits for students, another source of motivation is the requirement that school districts have in place a system of instructional support according to special education regulations. As the screening process for multidisciplinary evaluation, IST is a required service and is subject to monitoring by the Bureau of Special Education. In addition, the Instructional Support Team is required at elementary level by Act 211.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This section is helpful in defining specific areas for improvement.

action plan: a press by which the IST plans upcoming training events based on a self-assessment of level of implementation of IST processes.

active involvement of the principal: organization and management of the IST process, participation with each IST student in at least an advisory manner, encouragement of team members, facilitation and support of program. Routine functions can be delegated to designees.

assessment: a dynamic process in which the student's functional academic and coping skills are analyzed within a naturalistic setting (i.e., the classroom).

components of IST: collaboration, curriculum-based assessment, instructional adaptations, student coping skills, and effective interaction patterns.

continuum of services: the regular and special education options that are available to each student in the IST process. These services are selected by the IST in an ordered priority, from least to most intensive. The prioritized order is:

Peer support and exchange for instructional personnel
Instructional consultation for school personnel
Classroom training for instructional personnel
Paraprofessional
Team teacher: for example, additional teacher in the classroom
Special teacher: part-time: (remedial teacher)
full-time: (special education teacher)
Specialist: for example, therapist

The elements of this continuum should be reflected in a Directory of Services, which may include other options. However, there should be evidence that this continuum is used for students receiving instructional support. It is not sufficient that a Directory is available and not used.

core team: principal or designee, support teacher, classroom teacher.

curriculum-based assessment: a strategy of student appraisal that uses the classroom curriculum to analyze the student's instructional level and to compare that level with classroom requirements.

degree of need: the amount of personnel, time, and adaptations needed for a student to succeed.

guided practice: a type of staff training in which the trainer leads the trainee through the performance of a specified task (doing it together), typically performed in real-life situations.

interventions: strategies that lead to successful school performance. Examples of interventions are:

1) adaptation of materials to the instructional level of the student to overcome academic skill deficits;
2) strategies designed to improve self esteem, decision-making skills, social interaction skills or skills for identification and communication of feelings; and,
3) a structured discipline plan to insure that a student exhibits appropriate classroom behavior.

least intensive level: peer support and exchange for instructional personnel, instructional consultation for school personnel, classroom training for instructional personnel, paraprofessionals.

level I screening: determining which students should be identified for the instructional support process by analyzing group-based data such as cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, report cards, etc.

level II screening: determining which students should be identified for the instructional support press by analyzing results of sensory, motor, speech and language screenings.

level of difficulty: the ratio of known and unknown material in an instructional situation.

log: a document indicating at least the following information: name of students served by IST, date of initiation of IST, person requesting assistance, date of parental notification, date and nature of student-specific action.

measurable goals: instructional or behavioral/affective targets set by the IST for individual students that are stated with sufficient precision to allow for frequent measurement throughout the IST process in order to evaluate the student's reaction to the intervention.

monitoring: a procedure by which an IST member is assigned to provide support to the classroom teacher and to assess regularly the implementation of the intervention an the student's response to it.

most intensive level: team teacher, additional classroom teacher, special teacher, part-time special teacher, full-time special teacher.

overview of IST: a presentation of the essential aspects of the IST process, including the procedures of IST and descriptions of the five training components.

PDE requirements for support teacher: employment and assignment of support teacher in accord with district/PDE agreement (supplied to review team).

parent contact: a verbal or written communication to parents advising that their child is receiving services of the IST.

principal's training: state-sponsored Pennsylvania Principal's Training Model; in-service including an overview of IST components, at-risk training, and team training; guided practice in the collaboration process.

processes of IST: the steps in the collaborative process, i.e., entry, hypotheses forming, verifying, and outcome.

rate of acquisition: the relative ease with which a student learns new information or acquires appropriate skills.

rate of retention: the ability of a student to retain and use information or skills in meaningful ways.

structured discipline plan: a plan developed to address the interventions designed to foster appropriate school behavior including precise descriptions of the problem behavior, the desired adult-student communication patterns, and back-up techniques.

time guidelines: (all times are maximums) 10 days from initial expression of concern to IST review; 10 days from initial IST review to modification of instruction; 30 days to implement interventions, monitor their success, and decide on referral to MDE; 10 days to process referral for MDE, if applicable. Entire process is 60 days.

training: a system of in-service programs based on the instructional model, including overview presentations, group presentations, school-based demonstrations, and guided and independent practice with the participants. The following training activities are required for validation:

> Principal: PPTM, At-Risk training, overviews of other components, team training.
> Support Teacher: At-Risk training, team training, guided practice in CBA and Instructional Adaptations.
> Other: At least one other person attending At-Risk training and team training, guided practice for at least one team member in effective interactions patterns and at-risk strategies, guided practice in collaboration for the team.

REPORT FORMS

Guidelines
Official Report Form
Sample Report Form

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE VALIDATION REPORT

The validation report will describe the school's achievement of the basic features of IST as well as the benchmarks of effective practice. Suggested areas for improvement will be indicated also. The report must stay within the confines of these elements (included in the Review Document) because schools have been advised that these are the criteria for validation. The report needs to be written in an objective manner, indicating clearly whether or not the various features have been achieved. More specific suggestions are provided in the section entitled "Presenting Results."

Validation reports should be completed on the IST Validation Report Form. You may duplicate the form provided to you or request a copy of the form on Microsoft Word 5.1. You can do this by mailing a diskette to Della Trager, IST, 1110 Enterprise Road, East Petersburg, PA 17520.

All reports must be typed, free of typographical and grammatical errors, and received in the IST office within one month of the validation visit. **The deadline for receiving ALL Validation Reports in the IST Office is July 1.** Once received in the IST office, the reports are proofread and duplicated for distribution to the schools, the original IST Consultant to the school and the current SSI Consultant. Lead validators are not to send reports directly to the school districts.

Please be completely accurate in completing the cover sheets for the reports. For example, Brownstone Area School District should be written exactly as that and not as Browns Town School District or Brownstown Area or some other variation of the correct title. The exact title may be researched in the Pennsylvania Education Directory if you are in doubt. The information provided on the cover sheets of the Validation Report is used in the issuing of a Validation Certificate from the Bureau of Special Education, so using the correct name of the school district is very important. It would also be good to be sure that all other information such as the principal's name and name of the building being validated is spelled correctly. In addition, please do not use abbreviations or nicknames on the cover sheet.

Mail completed reports to:

Dr. Joseph Kovaleski
IST
1110 Enterprise Road
East Petersburg, PA 17520

Do not "quickmail" your reports.

OFFICIAL FORMS

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT TEAM VALIDATION REVIEW REPORT 1995

SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUPERINTENDENT

SUPERINTENDENT'S MAILING ADDRESS

INTERMEDIATE UNIT

SCHOOL BUILDING

BUILDING PRINCIPAL

SCHOOL'S MAILING ADDRESS

CITY/STATE ZIP

REGIONAL IST CONSULTANT TO SCHOOL DISTRICT

IU SSI CONSULTANT TO SCHOOL DISTRICT

VALIDATION TEAM MEMBERS

TEAM CHAIRPERSON

TEAM MEMBER

TEAM MEMBER

DATE OF VISITATION

DATE REPORT PREPARED

DATE REPORT MAILED TO DISTRICT

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF IST

Basic features in place: ❑Yes ❑No

Comments:

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

Comments:

TRAINING

Basic features in place: ❑Yes ❑No

Comments:

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

Comments:

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Basic features in place: ❑Yes ❑No

Comment(s):

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

Comments:

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CLASSROOM INTERVENTIONS

Basic features in place: ❑Yes ❑No

Comment(s):

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

Comments:

OUTCOMES

Basic features in place: ❑Yes ❑No

Comment(s):

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

Comments:

TEAMWORK

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

Comments:

SCREENING AND REFERRAL TO MDE

Basic features in place: ❑Yes ❑No

Comments:

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

Comments:

SAMPLE REPORT - 1995

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT TEAM VALIDATION REVIEW REPORT 1995

SCHOOL DISTRICT	[New Bedford Area SD]
SUPERINTENDENT	[Dr. Samuel Moor]
SUPERINTENDENT'S MAILING ADDRESS	[700 School Lane New Bedford, PA 20020]
INTERMEDIATE UNIT	[#30]
SCHOOL BUILDING	[Pequod Elementary]
BUILDING PRINCIPAL	[I. M. Captain]
SCHOOL'S MAILING ADDRESS	[77 Highseas Drive]
CITY/STATE/ZIP	[New Bedford, PA 20021]
REGIONAL IST CONSULTANT TO SCHOOL DISTRICT	[Dr. Joan Kelp]
IU SSI CONSULTANT TO SCHOOL DISTRICT	[Barry Urchin]

VALIDATION TEAM MEMBERS

TEAM CHAIRPERSON	[Dr. Melody Meed]
TEAM MEMBER	[Lana Trump]
TEAM MEMBER	[Alexander Bell]

DATE OF VISITATION	[May 15, 1995]
DATE REPORT PREPARED	[May 18, 1995]
DATE REPORT MAILED TO DISTRICT	[June 13, 1995]

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF IST

Basic features in place: ☑Yes ☐No

Comments:

The principal, support teacher, and classroom teacher are always involved in the IST, with other school staff added as needed. The PDE/district agreement that two teachers share the support teacher role is verified, in that both teachers can document that 50% or more of their time is spent on direct IST activities.

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

Comments:

Other school staff have an active part in IST depending on the nature of the presenting concern. For example, Chapter I teachers are included in all issues regarding reading; the guidance counselor or school psychologist is involved when behavioral concerns are presented.

The principal's logging system is very efficient; it could be shared with other districts. Parent contacts are handled in a timely and sensitive manner.

Finding time for team meetings was reported on a number of occasions as a problem. A team maintenance session to deal with this issue is suggested.

TRAINING

Basic features in place: ☑Yes ☐No

Comments:

The entire original team received the required training and have planned and carried out several staff training activities. A new principal started this year and has received overviews of IST and participated in staff training activities. The original principal attended the Penna. Principal's Training Model.

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

Comments:

All team members received the required training. The principal has received guided practice in collaboration and effective interaction patterns. The school psychologist has received guided practice in the Student Assistance area. Many teachers have received guided practice in CBA and Instructional Adaptations.

The principal has indicated a desire to attend Principals' Training and should be included in a future session.

A sincere effort has been made to provide training in IST to the entire school. There is a plan to include training in collaboration and some of the other training components in the teacher induction program. A strong district-IU connection for technical assistance exists.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Basic features in place: ☑Yes ☐No

Comment(s):

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

Comments:

There is close collaboration among staff members in assessing the total picture of the child. Academic, behavioral, and at-risk issues are explored in appropriate and thorough ways. Curriculum-Based Assessment is used for all academic areas. The team has taken a broad view of CBA to include both mechanics and comprehension/understanding in the areas of concern. The support teachers and reading specialists are working on connecting the academic assessment with portfolio assessment procedures.

The IST is searching for better ways to document behavioral and affective improvement during the course of the intervention. It is suggested that the team identify the student's inappropriate behaviors in the classroom, life stressors, and coping skills (i.e., self-concept, decision-making, social interaction, and identification/communications with the student). Measuring these areas in a behavioral way will allow for frequent measurement throughout the intervention period.

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CLASSROOM INTERVENTIONS

Basic features in place: ☑Yes ☐No

Comment(s):

There is a written continuum of services, but there is no indication that it is followed in a least to most intensive manner. The support teachers do a good job of identifying the student's instructional level and determining an intervention that works. However, there is a "fading" problem in that the intervention is not translated into a change in the classroom teacher's instructional routine. No teachers interviewed could identify a specific intervention that they are using as a result of IST. Rather, if the interventions are carried through it is in the pull-out remedial program. Support should be provided to the classroom teacher to implement the intervention in the classroom.

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

Comments:

When confronted with student life stressors, the IST has good connections with community agencies as well as special services within the school.

The IST has not been used to provide support to students with disabilities who might be included in regular classroom programs. The IST indicated their interest in receiving technical assistance in furthering inclusive practices.

The IU SSI program expressed willingness to assist the team in addressing in-class interventions in order to rectify the missing feature described above.

OUTCOMES

Basic features in place: ☑Yes ☐No

Comment(s):

All required data are correctly reported to BSE.

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

Comments:

The school district has been tracking student grades and achievement scores of students receiving instructional support, as well as achievement scores of the schools in the IST program.

A thorough attempt to assess the effectiveness of IST for individual students as well as the school as a whole is under way.

TEAMWORK

Benchmarks of Effective Practice

Comments:

The IST appears dedicated to the use of the problem-solving process in the solution to classroom-based problems. In conducting its meeting, the support teacher and classroom teacher enter with a precise identified problem. Measurable goals are set and brainstorming is targeted to strategies related to the goal. Plans are made during the meeting for monitoring during the intervention period and a review of the problem at the close of this process.

The support teacher shared several interesting techniques that are used to insure teamwork, especially given the limited time available for team meetings. The IST should search for time to conduct needed team maintenance and renewal activities.

SCREENING AND REFERRAL TO MDE

Basic features in place: ☑Yes ☐No

Comments:

Decisions about referral to MDE seem to be consistently based on the results of the intervention and the IST's decision on the degree of need displayed by the student. Curriculum-Based Assessment data are used to estimate the student's rate of acquisition and rate of retention. As indicated in the Student Assessment Section, it is suggested that further training be sought by the team on applying the concepts of Rate of Acquisition and Retention to behavioral and affective areas. Level I and Level II screening are appropriately conducted.

PREPARATION

Chairperson's Checklist
Sample Schedule

CHAIRPERSON'S CHECKLIST

- Project Director will send letters to the principal.
- PDE will make copies of agreement forms available to chairpersons. Training forms will come from the Project Director.
- Contact building consultant to discuss and clarify procedures.

Before the visit

1. Send any necessary packets, including explanatory letter (See Appendix), to Support Teacher and Principal.
2. Contact school: Secure date, ask for school schedule, get directions.
   Ask to have the folders regarding students to be observed to be sent to you in advance. This will enable validation team to review the information before the visit.
3. Contact validation team members to set dates.
4. Prepare schedule for validation team (who will do what observation/interview) based on the schedule provided by the school.
5. Invite IU SSI person to attend all or part of this day. Their presence will be particularly helpful during the 2:30 feedback session. This is:
   * an excellent time to prepare for their input/participation in the upcoming months and next school year.
   * an opportune time to revisit the action plan and make plans for institutionalizing the IST model (faculty in-service, parent workshops, etc.)

Review Day

1. Arrive - Meet with principal and support teacher and go over day's schedule. Discuss cases to be observed and revise times as needed.
2. Greet validation team members and go over procedure:

   Schedule - who does what, how, when
   Review interview process and observation purpose.
   Go over interview procedure and techniques.
   Distribute schedules and explain.
   Discuss lunch.
   Discuss where everything takes place.
   Clarify any concerns or questions.

Reminder: We are evaluating the process not the individual people. Avoid comparison with other schools!!!!!!!

Observation of student

We are looking at the student's comfort level/time on task/success rate as s/he participates in class.

Procedure: Ask questions of student or teacher, if needed, and, if we don't interfere with lesson(s), look for evidence of interventions found listed in student folders.

After observations and interviews

1. Bring validation team together at appointed time to discuss findings.
2. Share observations, using notes.
3. Discuss discrepancies and reach consensus.
4. Prepare school report to be given verbally by chairperson. (Send typed reports to the Project Director).
5. Share report with team members as pre-arranged by principal. Report on presence of required items. Provide other feedback (i.e., absence of effective practice), if requested. (This might be one of the items to clarify with the principal in advance). Explain that a written report will be coming. Thank everyone (review team members and school personnel). Answer questions courteously.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Date_____

Team members:_____

Time: To be decided by school team.

8:15 - 8:30 Chairperson arrives, speaks to principal and support teacher.

8:30 - 9:30 Chairperson greets and orients validation team members and reviews and/or assigns schedule. Remember to divide team meeting checklist duties also. Team reviews files of student(s) being observed. Reminder ... The purpose of the observation is to note the intervention was implemented. We are also interested in the student's perceptions of this intervention, the teacher's perception of the entire process and the parent's perception.

9:30 - 9:45 Orientation to building from principal and support teacher. Team members will now follow their assigned schedules.

TIME	MEMBER #1	MEMBER #2	MEMBER #3
9:45 - 10:30	Observe Student #1	Observe Student #2	Observe Student #3
	During this time conduct student interview and teacher interview. Limit the teacher interview to 15 minutes.		
10:35 - 11:05	Interview Parent #1	Interview Parent #2	Interview Parent #3
11:15 - 11:45	Interview Principal	Interview Support Teacher	Interview Team Member
11:50 - 12:15	Interview	Interview	Interview
	Other team members (such as: guidance counselors, psychologists, reading specialists, classroom teachers, other school selected personnel, or parents.)		

11:45	.....LUNCH.....
12:45 - 1:15	View IST Meeting
1:15 - 1:45	Debrief following team meeting. The team may discuss anything they wish the reviewers to know at this time. The reviewers may ask for clarifications at this time.
1:45 - 2:00	Review needed documents and forms.
2:00 - 2:30	Scoring/consensus building. Team members discuss their findings. Chairperson selects someone to write the building report which will be based on the consensus reached by all members of the team.
2:30	Develop report.
3:00	Feedback Session. The Review Team will provide feedback on the level of implementation of instructional support that was observed during the day by reading the report and informing the IST that a typewritten copy of this report will be coming. The Review Team will offer technical assistance that may be needed to incorporate missing features or to improve existing features. It is recommended that schools invite the IST consultants from the IU SSI program to discuss future technical assistance that is available from the IU.

INTERVIEWS

Techniques
Sample Interviews

INTERVIEWS

Purpose

The interview section of the validation visit will allow school personnel to express how the various training components fit into the IST process as a whole and to identify and to elaborate upon those instructional assessment features which they feel are central to IST. The interviewees should be able to display understanding of both the purpose of IST and the various aspects of the process. Indicators that school staff have a good grasp of those features and are successfully implementing them within their schools would include the following:

1. Articulating the IST process
   a. The parameters of IST involvement
   b. The personnel involved
   c. The amount of training needed
   d. The request and screening process
      - Identification of needs
      - Development of an intervention plan
      - Implementing and fine-tuning the plan
      - Monitoring and recording process
   e. The time frames for direct and indirect support
   f. MDE and extended services if needed

2. Articulating the role of student assessment in the process
   a. The role of CBA
   b. The connection between assessment and the curriculum
   c. The assessment of life stressors, life skills, and behavior
   d. The use of student assessment in guiding decisions about curriculum, instruction, and intervention

3. Articulating the purpose and parameters of assessment and intervention
   a. Creating an appropriate instructional match
   b. Creating conditions for frequent and continuous measurement
   c. Viewing assessment as a process rather than a single strategy
   d. Following naturalistic assessment steps
   e. Discussing appropriate strategies for developing good mechanics, comprehension, understanding, self-esteem, interpersonal skills, etc.

Interview Techniques

In addition to building rapport with school staff at the beginning of the day, it is critical to make each interviewee as comfortable as possible. Begin each interview by getting to know the interviewee. Ask about his or her job in the building, etc. Often this conversation can lead naturally into a general question as to involvement in IST.

Four useful skills that can be utilized in conducting the interviews are open-ended question, close-ended questions, rephrasing, and probing.

Open-ended Questions -

Open-ended or divergent questions allow the interviewee maximum latitude to respond fully. This provides the interviewer with more information. Sample open-ended questions begin with:

Tell me how ...
Explain ...
Describe ...
What kind of activities ...
Help me to understand ...

An example of a general question would be:
"How does your IST process work?"

Close-ended questions -

Close-ended questions frequently limit the answer to a "yes" or "no" response or to a specific piece of information. While it is best not to begin with close-ended questions, there are times when they are needed to obtain specific information. Sample beginnings for these questions are:

Did you ...
When ...
Do you ...

An example is: "When did you attend Principal's training?"

Rephrasing and Probing -

When an interviewee fails to respond or seems confused, it is helpful to rephrase the question. If the response is incomplete or uncertain, probing is needed. Sample probes are:

What else can you tell me ...
Explain in more detail ...
Can you elaborate on how ...
What would happen if ...

An example of a probing question is:
"What would happen if a parent wanted IST services for his or her child?"

Sometimes it is helpful to simply repeat some of the interviewee's phrases in order to explore more fully the statements that the interviewee has begun to express.

Combining Styles -

The most effective approach to conducting interviews is to ask general or open-ended questions first. As the interviewee responds to an open-ended question, listen for specific answers that may range across several topics/items. Give credit for those items that are addressed in the staff member's response. It is not necessary to ask a specific question from the manual if the answer has been satisfactorily provided in response to a general question.

After gleaning sufficient information from open-ended questions, begin to work through the questions in the manual that have not been answered as a result of the record review or the initial general questions. The manual questions have been composed to facilitate open-ended responses rather than simple "yes" and "no" answers. If the interviewee's responses to these questions are incomplete, use rephrasing or probe for more specific information. Use close-ended questions to get precise information when needed.

At the close of each interview, summarize the general conclusion of the interview to enable the interviewee to make final clarifications.

Helpful Hints

- It is acceptable to indicate to the interviewee that you need to take a few minutes to record answers and check off items before proceeding with further questions. You should be taking notes as you proceed.

- Keep the interview positive. Avoid phrases like, "We were concerned during the record review that ..." A better question would be, "Tell me more about ..."

- Create a setting that is conducive to establishing a good relationship. Chairs that face each other convey a feeling of openness and equality.

- Make sure that your body language is congruent with the verbal language. Incongruent communication results in mixed messages. Practice looking in a mirror or with a friend to be sure your facial expression is open and pleasant. Often when we are anxious we inadvertently portray an expression that is too intense for this day.

- Return to central themes of the interview. Don't "lose the forest for the trees." Use rephrasing and probing to gain clarity on the critical issues. For example, you may have to probe frequently as to how interventions are actually carried out in the regular classroom.

- Move into the interviewee's internal frame of reference. Find out how s/he genuinely sees the situation. It is crucial here not to pass judgment either in words or with body language. Remember we are not comparing schools with our own or any other school in a district. Look at this school and what they have accomplished.

- Use silence when appropriate to give the interviewee time to think. You don't have to fill every minute with words. At least seven seconds wait time should be given before repeating or restating the question.

- Be supportive. Reinforce the interviewee by letting him/her know that his/her responses are important.

- Be natural. Be yourself. Be honest.

Watch out for ...

- Unfriendly or indifferent attitudes - The setting for the interview should be conducive to the creation of a friendly but business-like atmosphere.

- Interrupting - In addition to being rude, interrupting cuts off the interviewee's thoughts.

- Story-telling - Don't get caught up on expounding ideas or telling stories. Move the process along, but don't be too guarded or structured.

- Intimidating or threatening behavior - This confirms the lack of respect for the interviewee and tells him/her that you see yourself as the authority.

- Ridiculing or sarcastic behavior - This will only create anger in the interviewee.

- Jargon - It creates a barrier to communication.

- Showing disbelief - It creates a barrier to communication.

- Asking two questions at once - The interviewee will not know which one to answer.

- Asking leading questions - Try to use questions that avoid creating defensiveness or putting words into the interviewee's mouth.

- Conveying the idea that the interviewee's responses are unimportant by rejecting them.

- Telling the interviewee what to say - Instead, help the interviewee arrive at his or her response.

- Bad body language, such as folding your arms across your chest, standing with your hands on hips, covering your face with your hand, hands in pockets, fiddling with hair or jewelry.

SAMPLE INTERVIEWS

These are sample interviews which you might find helpful. If information is evident from observations or the examination of files, rephrase or omit relevant questions. Become very familiar with the items so that you can participate in the interview comfortably rather than reading a list of questions in the manner of an inquisition. Feel free to use your own style to gain required information, but remember good interview techniques.

General questions - for all team members and teachers who have used the IST process:

Tell me about the IST program in _____ school. (You may indicate that when you have finished you may ask additional questions.)

What is your role in the IST process?

How do you think your staff views the process?

What are the positive aspects of the program that are currently in place?

What plans do you have for the next school year?

Would you like to become more or less involved in any way?

Is there any area of your program in which the instructional support consultant has been particularly helpful?

Is there any area in which you could use more help from your consultant? ... your regional support center?

Describe the training you received. We welcome any feedback you care to give.

Student interview - When observing the student prior to the interview, look for his or her comfort level, time on task, and success rate. Look for evidence of interventions listed in the IST folder. Some of these observances may be relevant to the interview.

What have you, your classroom teacher (specify name) and your support teacher (specify name) been working on together?

What plans have you made to try to do better in the (given area as specified in this child's plan)?

How have the support teacher and classroom teacher been helping you to do better?

What has changed as a result of this help?

How do you know that you are doing better?

Is there anything that you think would help that you or others are not already doing?

How do you think these suggestions will help?

What do you want to do better that is now giving you some trouble?

How have you already tried to do this better?

Is anyone at home working with your teacher and support teacher?

Notes for student observation and review -

PRINCIPAL - SUPPORT TEACHER - OTHER MEMBERS

Who are the team members? What are their roles?

How have you involved the classroom teacher? The parent? (This might be a good time to ask how parents can access IST support and how they are made aware of this process).

What is your involvement?

Are the parents and the teacher satisfied with the program? Are you? Explain.

Describe your participation in all of the training components.

Have your training concerns been met?

Do you have any suggestions or requests?

What are your biggest concerns?

How do you deal with them?

Notes ...

(Principal specific)

When did you attend Principal's training?

Describe your involvement with the on-site guided practice activities.

How do you record:

Number of students receiving instructional support
Sources of that report
Number of behavioral incidents - change from previous years
Number of formal suspensions - change from previous years
Number of students referred to MDE
Number of students placed in special education programs
Number of students retained

(Support Teacher specific)

How much time do you spend as a support teacher?

What might a typical day look like for you?

How are students referred to IST from Level I screening, Level II screening, by a parent, by a classroom teacher?

How do you document your cases? your timeliness? your screening procedures?

Tell me how you define a problem and set precise goals.

Describe how your team makes decisions regarding the monitoring of interventions (who, how?), the evaluation of outcomes, the need for and provision of training to parents, teachers, and tutors for implementation of interventions.

Notes for principal or support teacher interview:

Parent Interview

Tell me about your involvement in the IST process.

Prompts:

What was the overall concern for _____?
Did you participate in any meetings? By phone?
Did you have an opportunity to express your concerns? Opinions?
Was a plan developed to help _____?
Did you have a role? Tell me about it.
Were you kept updated on _____'s progress?
What has this program done for _____?
Would you recommend the IST program to other parents?
Explain:

Notes:

Classroom Referring Teacher Interview

Tell me about your involvement in the IST process when you requested support with _____.

Prompts:

Did you have an opportunity to share your concerns? Opinions?
Explain how the team helped you help your student to be successful.
Explain any involvement you have with _____'s parent(s).
Was a plan developed? Did you have a role? Explain.
Did the team keep up with _____'s progress?
What has the IST program done for _____? For you?
Would you recommend it to your colleagues? Explain.
What has changed in your classroom for the student as a result of IST?
What did you do differently? Was the student successful?
What was done to facilitate this success?

Notes:

Other Team Members - additional questions

Tell me about your involvement in IST.

Prompts:

- What is your role on the team?
- Do you feel your contributions are valued?
- Tell me about your personal use of the components of IST: Adapt, CBA, Coping skills, effective interaction patterns.
- What are some activities that you have performed with students? With parents? With others?

Notes:

TEAM MEETING CHECKLIST

Elements Required for Validation

TEAM MEETING CHECKLIST

Use this checklist while observing a team meeting.

You may opt to divide the items among your team members so that each of you is looking at different aspects of the meeting. Try to overlap so that you have two opinions on each item, thereby increasing reliability. If you find out in advance what the purpose of the meeting is, you may determine that some of the items do you apply.

The purpose of this meeting appears to be:

OBJECTIVE	YES	NO
Team exhibits adequate knowledge regarding their work as a team.		
Team members are recognized for their contributions to the team process.		
Team members have adequate opportunity to share perspectives and philosophical beliefs regarding the case under consideration.		
Team operating procedures seem to be known by team members.		
Team appears to be sensitive to the needs of each team member.		
Team appears to recognize that all members are accountable. Re: the outcome of their decision(s).		
Leadership is evident.		
For academic problems, curriculum based assessment appears to be planned or to have been conducted.		
Team is in the process of identifying, or has identified, the problem in the area(s) of behavior, coping skills and/or academics.		
Team has set a precise goal for success for the student.		
After the problem and goal have been set, team uses a short brainstorming session to generate alternative ideas (about 3 minutes).		
After the problem and goal have been set, team uses a short brainstorming session to generate alternative ideas (about 3 minutes).		
After the problem and goal have been set, team uses a short brainstorming session to generate alternative ideas (about 3 minutes).		
Team identifies the staff who will be involved in the intervention (i.e., classroom teacher, support teacher, etc.) and the duties of each.		
Team assigns a person to monitor/facilitate the intervention.		
Team decides how the intervention will be reviewed and evaluated.		
Team determines degree of need at the end of the intervention period.		
Team refers for MDE if interventions do not produce desired progress.		
Parent(s) involvement in the process is evident.		

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PRESENTING RESULTS

Providing Feedback
Validation Report Preparation

PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Providing good information about the feedback session at the beginning of the Validation Day sets the tone for an effective feedback session at the end of the day. The document of reference is the review document which contains basic requirements and benchmarks of effective practice.* (See Chapter 1.) Comments will revolve around this material. While discussion may go beyond these items, the written report will not.

Suggestions

*In the initial meeting with the principal and team, it is important to indicate that the Validation process has two focuses. First, the IST program will be reviewed for indications that the basic features of the process are in place. Second, and more critical, the program will be reviewed in terms of practices and procedures that enable this process to be effective for students, parents, and teachers. After approximately one and a half to two years of operation, it is not expected that schools will have made system-wide, institutionalized changes in all classrooms and programs. Rather, IST validation comes at a time in which schools are refining their process. Consequently, the Validation Team will expect to see real accomplishments along with a number of areas in which improvement may be suggested. The following examples illustrate these two elements:

1. A school advises parents that their children are being seen by the IST, but parents neither attend meetings nor participate in the intervention. In this case, the Validation Team would commend the school staff for having a basic feature in place (notification of parents) and would encourage discussion of how parents could have a more active role.

2. A school assesses students only in the area of word identification. In this case, the Validation Team may state that they saw no evidence of the assessment of comprehension and might suggest that the IST work with a reading specialist or other professional to enhance assessment of higher order skills.

While specific methods for accomplishing recommended improvements may be discussed during the visit, the report would only encourage that certain areas be investigated. Specific techniques would not be mentioned.

*In the initial session with the principal and team, it is important to convey that there is no rating or grading in validation. The Validation Team will indicate the basic features that are in place will commend the team on accomplishments achieved and will advise the team on areas of improvement. The school will either be validated at the time of the site visit or at a later time when documentation is provided that missing features are in place. In either case, no "grade" or "pass-fail" rating will be assigned.

*During the feedback session, points described above which were covered in the morning session should be reviewed. Then the Validation Team should state whether or not validation has been achieved and give the IST an overview of its reactions. After these general comments, the Validation Team can proceed to give more detailed comments section by section. It is best to pause after each section and engage in a dialogue with the IST, eliciting comments and reactions. This procedure will encourage collegial understanding of the school's progress.

*Validation Teams should be particularly wary of sending mixed messages to the school team. Complaints have been received in previous years that Validation Team members have been highly positive

throughout the day only to become negative during feedback. It is important that IST members not experience this lack of congruence.

*In giving suggestions for improvement, it is absolutely critical to distinguish between those suggestions that are reflective of essential elements of IST and those which are advisory, based on the experience of the Validation Team. For example, the Validation Team might indicate that ongoing data collection throughout the intervention period is needed and is an essential aspect of the IST process. However, the method by which the data are maintained is a matter of individual school preference and should be indicated as such.

*It is a useful procedure for Validation Team members to monitor each other's feedback styles. If one team member is too harsh, another can take a gentler tone. All Validation Team members need to be sensitive to the body language and other reactions of the IST. This is not to suggest that clear validation information not be provided honestly. Rather, it speaks to the style of the presentation and suggests the need for awareness of the Validation Team's impact on the IST. A supportive and collegial approach is more likely to result in IST improvement than a judgmental approach is. In any case, Validation Teams need to assume a factual rather than a mandated tone. It is best to avoid words such as "should," "must," "never" and use words such as "suggested" and "recommended" instead.

VALIDATION REPORT PROCEDURES

While the feedback discussion may include a wide-ranging conversation about various effective school practices, the report should avoid discussions of or recommendations for activities that go beyond the basic features or benchmarks. For example, it might be recommended in the report that the IST work toward incorporating interventions into the classroom routine (i.e., fading the support teacher's role). However, it would not be appropriate to include in the report that a particular technique (e.g., cooperative learning) be used. The difference is that the fading of the support teacher is a required feature while cooperative learning is only a useful idea. It is important to maintain this distinction because consumers of the Validation Report in districts often interpret recommendations as "must do" rather than as helpful suggestions.

Validation teams should guard against recommending idiosyncratic ways of implementing certain features that may be prominent in some areas of the state. An example heard was the belief by some Validation Teams that every student identified for instructional support must be exposed to 10 sessions of CBA, regardless of the nature of the presenting concern. This practice is neither a part of IST training nor a benchmark of effective practice, yet the entire Team believed this to be the case and included it in the report.

Overall, the tone of the report should be positive and encouraging. It is useful to remember, again, that schools are not expected to have implemented the complete process in all classrooms and all programs. Because Validation comes at a time when procedures are being refined, the report should stress accomplishments along with suggested areas for improvement.

APPENDIX

Sample Letter
Sample Agenda
Simulated Interviews
Training Cartoons
Travel Reimbursement Forms
Forms

SAMPLE LETTER

This is an example of the information which the chair of the Validation Team will send to the school principal.

Dear _____,

This letter is to confirm the scheduling of your Instructional Support Team validation site for ___(date)

.

Your validation team members are:

I will be serving as the chair of the validation team.

When we arrive at ___(school)___, we would like to meet briefly with you to review the day's agenda and to locate items needed for examination. The purpose of the IST validation day is to observe the basic requirements of the IST, as well as the benchmarks of effective practice that have been implemented. The following documents may be reviewed during our visit:

Principal's Log
District Action Plan
Directory of Services
District description of the IST process (if available)
IST meeting schedule (if available)
Certificates of completion of Elementary Student Assistance training

From the Principal's Log, you need to select three students rep;resenting requests for assistance in these areas: reading, math, life skills and classroom behavior. Part of the validation process will consist of observations and interviews with these students, their teachers, their parent(s), and others involved with the interventions implemented during the IST process. We need to observe students at a time when the intervention is apparent. It will be most helpful if the observation and interviews are arranged in advance, especially when parents are involved.

The second portion of the site visit will consist of individual interviews with the principal, support teacher(s), and other team members (e.g., guidance counselor, reading specialist, school psychologist) who have been involved with the IST process. The questions focus upon staff members' roles and experiences with the IST press.

The third portion of the visit will consist of an observation of a team meeting which will illustrate the manner in which cases are handled.

Upon completion of the observation and interviews, the validation team will meet to prepare a summary report. We may call upon you or other staff members if further clarifications are needed. If you and the IST have discussed ideas for the coming year and wish to have them in your report, please feel free to request this. We anticipate mailing a summary report of the validation site by the end of the school term.

We are looking forward to visiting your school. If you have any questions, please call me at _____.

SAMPLE AGENDA

9:00	Greetings Vision of Validation Training Packet
9:30	Review the Agenda
9:45	Roles: Chairperson, Team Members
10:15	A Look at the Validation Day
10:45	The Validation Instrument: Basic Requirements and Benchmarks of Effective Practice Glossary of Terms
12:00	Lunch
1:00	Observations: Students, Team Meeting Interview Techniques Simulated Activity
2:00	Feedback Session Report Writing
3:00	Questions and Answers
3:30	Adjourn

SIMULATION: INTERVIEWS

Directions

A interviews B; C interviews D; one observer, one recorder per group. Select roles of interviewees (i.e., principal, support teacher, parent). Find appropriate set of questions in the training packet.

Interviewer: While conduction the interview, use appropriate body language, voice, tone and facial gestures. Look for any questions which need clarification.

Interviewee: During the interview, deliberately be vague (see examples below or add others you have heard) so interviewer must use prompts or clarifying questions.

Observer: Watch for congruence, friendly tone, facial expression; provide feedback.

Recorder: Make a list of clarifying questions for sharing session.

Rotate roles so all have an opportunity to be the interviewer and all sets of interview questions have been used. This is an important part of the training; please take it seriously.

Vague Responses

By the Principal: (in response to "Tell me about the IST program in your school.")

... My support teacher understands the program better than I do. Let's call him/her in.

... We have a team. We meet weekly. We discuss cases. We judge placement of the children after 60 days.

... I did not go to the principal's training, but my predecessor did. (Reminder: This is acceptable, but the principal is welcome to attend training at any time).

... The log --- oh, that is something my support teacher takes care of.

... I don't attend every meeting.

By the Parent:

... They called me. I came in. They told me what I had to do. It seems to be working.

... I have been helping my child learn new words.

... I make sure he/she knows what I mean when I speak to him/her

By the support teacher:

... I don't really teach kids; I just facilitate the process.

... I have other duties in addition to IST.

... I am the team.

... I can't get the classroom teacher to take over the intervention.

... I don't log in everybody I work with.

... If you are involved in intervention, you should be doing the whole thing.

By the classroom teacher:

... I made a request for assistance and we met. We developed a plan and it is working.

... I like the way the support teacher works with my students.

... This process is great! I've received so much help. My kids do so much better now!

... I don't know much about that strategy because the support teacher really does this.
(This item would be failed as pertaining to the continuum of services because the classroom teacher's involvement, as the least restrictive alternative, must be tried.)

By other team members:

... I'm part of the team. I do brainstorming. I help evaluate progress.

... I'm sometimes called upon to do CBA or interview a parent.

... My role is to help monitor a case. I go to all our weekly meetings.

"Just pretend we're not here, Ms. Robinson..."

What we say to cats...
Well, Fluffy, you've clawed the furniture for the last time! I'll not tolerate that behavior any longer!...
What they hear
Larson

Instructional Support System
of Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Department of Education

INTERAGENCY SUPPORT PROJECT

6340 Flank Drive, Suite 600
Harrisburg PA 17112-2764
717-541-4960, toll free 800-360-7282
Fax 717-657-5983
TT 800-654-5984 (PA Relay)

GUIDELINES FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

ON-SITE VALIDATION VISITS

Your travel expenses will be reimbursed by Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, Box 213, Lewisburg, PA 17837

- Keep **ALL RECEIPTS** for your travel, such as airfare, trainfare, turnpike. **Original** receipts must be submitted.

- You will be reimbursed for your meals during travel. Keep **ALL RECEIPTS** for meals. **Original** receipts must be submitted.

- Federal funding disallows incidental costs; such as liquor, pay TV and non-business related phone calls. You are, therefore, expected to assume payment for these expenses.

The maximum allowance for meals per day is $24.00--per meal costs as follows:

Breakfast	$ 4.00
Lunch	$ 7.00
Dinner	$ 13.00

Questions: please call Sandy Boylan: 1-800-360-7282, Ext 3317

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM OF
PENNSYLVANIA/INTERAGENCY SUPPORT PROJECT
6340 FLANK DRIVE, SUITE 600
HARRISBURG, PA 17112

TRAVEL EXPENSE VOUCHER

NAME _____ TITLE _____
ADDRESS _____ DATE _____
_____
_____

YOU WILL RECEIVE REIMBURSEMENT FROM CENTRAL SUSQUEHANNA INTERMEDIATE UNIT. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL SANDY BOYLAN AT 1-800-222-7372.

DATE	DESTINATION	NO. OF MILES	REASON FOR EXPENSE

_____ X $.29 _____
TOTAL MILES MILEAGE EXPENSE

RECEIPTS REQUIRED FOR REIMBURSEMENT

DATE	OTHER EXPENSE	REASON FOR EXPENSE: (LODGING, AIRFAIRE, TURNPIKE TOLLS, ETC., INCLUDE RECEIPTS)

_____
TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES

BUDGET _____ MILEAGE EXPENSES _____
CODE _____ OTHER EXPENSES _____
TOTAL EXPENSES _____

I CERTIFY THAT ALL EXPENSES CLAIMED ARE CORRECT AND WERE INCURRED IN ORDER TO ATTEND: ON-SITE VISITS

SIGNATURE _____ APPROVED BY _____

VOUCHER MUST BE SUBMITTED WITHIN 30 DAYS TO AVOID DELAY OF PAYMENT